Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem

ADVICE FOR THOSE UNDERTAKING UMRAH

Hadhrat Moulana Dawood Seedat Sahib (Daamat Barakaatuhu)

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Alhamdulillah, many are fortunate to be undertaking the journey of Umrah and Ziyarah. A few points should be noted so that we can make the most of our stay in the Haramain Shareefain without falling into ghaflat (heedlessness) and sin.

1. Currently, only those who are in Ihraam, performing Umrah, have access to the mataaf. Added to this, due to the construction work taking place currently, from most parts of the Haram Shareef, one cannot even see the Ka'bah Shareef.

   Since the Ka'bah Shareef is the magnet, people want to go down to the mataaf to look at the Ka'bah Shareef, make Dua near the Ka'bah Shareef, perform Tawaaf, Salaah, engage in tilawah, etc. Now, with the present arrangement, for many, especially the younger people who are not accustomed to making Ibaadah, not much time is spent in the Haram Shareef. Many just go for the Fardh Salaah and leave. If they do spend some extra time, very quickly the cell-phone is

taken out and the time goes chatting to friends and others, social media, etc.

Those of us who are visiting the Haramain Shareefain need to get used to making personal, individual Ibaadah. We need to discipline ourselves by focussing on where we are, the great virtues of the Haramain Shareefain and the wonderful opportunities we have; opportunities which obviously should not be missed or wasted.

Quality time should thus be given for tilawat of the Qur'aan Shareef, Zikrullah, nafl Salaah and Dua. The nafl Salaah as well as Dua should be lengthened.

Even if the mataaf is not accessible and even if the Baitullah cannot be seen, we are still in the precincts of the Haram Shareef where every good deed is multiplied a hundred thousand and where Allah Ta'ala's mercy is descending 24/7. Whatever the set-up in the Haramain Shareefain, we must spend the time correctly and be with Allah Ta'ala.

2. In Madina Munawwarah, there is the new system where a booking has to be made to visit Riyadhul Jannah. This is once off per year. Here again, due to not having the opportunities as before, most people go for Salaah and are returning to their hotel rooms, not spending much time in

the Musjid to engage in Ibaadah. If people do sit, it is when there is a short time between two Fardh Salaah like Maghrib and Isha. However, so many are sitting with family and friends, passing time with talk, losing the special opportunities and occasions of Ibaadah. There is also no respect and adab (etiquette) while in the Musjid and we forget the sanctity of the places where we are.

3. On the one hand, we are not allowed to sit by the Baitullah, go freely to the Raudha Mubarak, ashaabus suffah, Tahajjud mihrab, etc. All these places are closed and cannot be accessed. On the other hand, from the Madina Haram to Quba, a walk way has been made. Visitors can walk or hire a bicycle or a golf cart. Along the way, coffee shops, franchise takeaways, etc. have opened, and the setup is like what is found in European countries, with a nightlife kind of atmosphere.

   On the one side people are not sitting in the Haram Shareef and engaging in Ibaadah and on the other side, these distractions in the form of attractions are outside the Haram Shareef. Many are then whiling away their time and getting caught up in sins. Many illicit relationships also continue there in the Haramain Shareefain.

4. Although this is a very contentious issue, it is extremely important that we be cautious regarding the food we consume. We can see what the Saudi regime is doing: bringing in so much of Haraam entertainment, fashion shows, music concerts, legalizing alcohol, etc. When so much of Haraam has been legalized, can we really trust them in regard to the meat - that all of the meat is Halaal?

   Their Scholars have also given the fatwa that machine-cut animals are halaal. We don't follow this fatwa. Although we will not say that everything is Haraam but there is a great need to exercise caution.

5. Many book into the top hotels which are on the frontline. These hotels offer bed and breakfast. Breakfast is a real spread with a lot of israaf and wastage.

   So many who are deeni inclined: Ulama, tablighis, those who have their connection with khanqahs, women in hijab and niqab, etc., who normally don't go to a restaurant to eat, do so in the Haramain Shareefain. They go to the hotel restaurant/hall which is no different from any other restaurant. Often purdah is compromised and it becomes a venue of sin where men and women are integrating, looking at each other and talking to each other.

In those restaurants, there are only tables and chairs. People who normally eat sitting on the floor, at a dastarkhan, discard the Sunnah in Madina Munawwarah and Makkah Mukarramah. Even in many of the plush hotels, the rooms have tables and chairs and people sit at the table although at home they sit on the floor. Ghaflat sets in.

6. Very sadly, the culture there is now very western. We need to be very selective if purchasing the clothes, cloaks, etc. that are available there. We must understand what purdah is. Purdah is to not attract attention to yourself.

   Some go every year. The latest cloaks were purchased last year and now they want to buy the latest cloaks that are on the market this year. When designing these cloaks for each season, the designers do not have purdah in mind. They are designing them from a fashion perspective and not purdah. For them, it is a lucrative market. Therefore, not every cloak is a cloak; not every niqab is a niqab. Purchasing it from Makkah Mukarramah or Madina Munawwarah doesn't make it Islamic. Most cloaks are very attractively designed, some have transparent sleeves, are tight-fitting, etc. They are made to attract and not distract. Unfortunately, we go and purchase these clothing items which defeats the purpose of the hijab and niqab. Although we are buying a cloak and

niqab, is it really a cloak or niqab or is it an evening gown or something that will invite attention?

The same will be found with the men. Sometimes the style of the kurta is not Sunnah. These days, the kurtas look more like shirts. They are also tight-fitting and more like a fashion statement and don't have any semblance of the Sunnah. We need to be very careful of what clothing items we are purchasing.

Insha-Allah, we can be conscious of these matters. May Allah Ta'ala grant us the taufeeq of amal, grant ikhlaas and accept our Umrah and Ziyarah. Aameen.